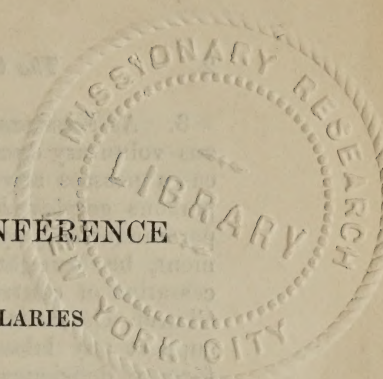


Bam
India



DECLARATION
OF THE
CALCUTTA MISSIONARY CONFERENCE
RESPECTING THE
PRINCIPLES ON WHICH THE SALARIES
OF

Native Catechists, Preachers, and Pastors ought to be determined.

[Reprinted from the C. C. Observer for November, 1856.]

The Calcutta Missionary Conference,—after having, at two successive meetings, very fully discussed the subject of native salaries in its varied aspects and bearings,—have, for themselves, unanimously agreed to the following declaration:—

1. From the constantly increasing number of native labourers of different grades, throughout our evangelical missions in India, it seems of vast importance—both with a view to secure, if possible, something like a general uniformity of action, and also to obviate sundry misconceptions, which have been found to prevail in various quarters—that the principles which ought to regulate the amount of support to be proffered to them by Foreign Churches or Missionary Societies, should be clearly and unmistakeably understood.

2. The leading principle on which Missionaries to the heathen have all along been sustained by the various Churches and Missionary Societies of Europe and America, is that of providing for the merely necessary wants of the brethren employed; and, therefore, supplying them with only such an amount of pecuniary means, as may enable them efficiently, without worldly anxiety or distraction of mind, to carry out the object in view, by the entire consecration of their undivided energies to the promulgation of “the truth as it is in Jesus.” That this principle is essentially scriptural in its nature, seems fully proved by its having been practically recognised in the provision made for the Jewish priesthood under the Levitical economy, and for evangelists and pastors in the first and purest ages of the Christian Church; as well as from its general prevalence throughout the great majority of evangelical Churches in the present day. Nor does it appear, on maturest thought, how any other principle can be received, without manifest injury resulting to the ministry and the Church of Christ.

3. As Missionary Societies are dependent on the continuous voluntary donations of individuals, and only in very rare cases possess any permanent funds or endowments, so the persons employed by them cannot confidently reckon on any permanent employment. Such employment may, at any moment, be brought to a close, by the want of funds or the cessation of contributions. Hence, no Missionary Society or Church Committee deems itself under *permanent obligation* to support any labourers from home, or even *indebted* to them for any deficiency in the usual allowance, should unforeseen circumstances beyond its control disenable such Society or Church Committee from remitting it.

4. A Missionary's salary, therefore, is neither *wages* nor *adequate remuneration*, in the ordinary secular significance of these terms. The connection of the Missionary with a Society or Church is not that of a master (in the worldly sense) who has a work of his own to do, and a servant who is hired, at the ordinary market price, for doing it. It is rather that of one benevolent individual assisting another benevolent individual to do a benevolent work, in which both are equally interested; with just so much power of direction as always exists in a donor, to determine the destination of his gifts.

5. The same guiding principle should operate in the employment and support of native labourers.

6. These are at present employed by Foreign Churches and Societies—who are simply engaged, through their own accredited agents, for a season, in introducing the gospel, and desirous, as the Lord enables them, of voluntarily bearing the needful expense—until, by the blessing of God, Christianity takes firm root in the land. The connection of such Foreign Churches and Societies, therefore, with this country is, from the very nature of the case, only *temporary*; and can never furnish native converts or native labourers with any valid plea for demanding temporal support, or even continued superintendence and instruction. In such a temporary and purely transitional state of things, a Foreign Missionary Society or Church, or a Foreign Missionary, acting as a chosen and trustworthy agent of either, undertakes to do no more than merely to *assist* the native Christian to do for his countrymen what has been done for himself. His services, being consecrated as a free-will offering to the work of God, are not like services rendered to an earthly employer, to be paid for, in money, according to their intrinsic value. They are given, if given in a proper evangelical spirit at all, altogether independently of gross pecuniary considerations. He ought to look for nothing and expect nothing, beyond what is included

in the supply of necessary wants. Accordingly, he is not hired, or adequately recompensed, after the customs or usages that regulate the transactions of mere government, mercantile, or other worldly business. The aid rendered, may be, or may not be, the entire means of support. It may be sufficient or insufficient; but, in neither case, can a *claim of right* be set up for *remuneration*. If it can, the whole principle is changed; the salary becomes a *debt*, and the claim *legal*. But, in this way, the purely spiritual and benevolent character of the Missionary enterprise is lost; and it becomes but one of many modes for gaining an earthly livelihood.

7. It is obvious that, in the practical application of the principles now enumerated, the provision to be made for the support of persons engaged in this work may vary almost indefinitely—with the means of the benevolent donors; with the nature and locality of the work to be done; with the personal habits and domestic condition of the agent sent forth; with the accessibility of the articles of subsistence and convenience of residence; with the differences that prevail in the civilization, the social wants, and the former life of various classes in the community of converts,—indeed, with the almost endlessly various range of contingent circumstances in which the work is carried on. The more regular and settled the work becomes, in the onward progress of Christianization, the more uniform will be, or may be, the means of support required.

8. Again, Missionaries being foreigners and the accredited agents of foreign Churches and Societies, whose present office in its very nature is temporary, any comparison between their position and that of their native brethren must necessarily be unsound. Native labourers are not foreigners, but residents in the country of their birth and education. It is obvious, therefore, that the practical application of our principle requires, that the standard for their competent support be not determined by that of any class of foreigners, whose life, amid the fervours of a tropical clime, is entirely an exotic one; whose health and strength, even with the aid of all lawful appliances, it is so difficult to maintain in unimpaired efficiency; and who also, at the same time, may have families and relatives more or less dependent on them, in their own native land. Clearly the type for a native ministry, as regards the amount of temporal maintenance, is to be found in the condition of the average majority of an indigenous ministry in European and American Christendom. The support to be accorded to them ought, consequently, to be regulated with direct and exclusive reference to the current rate of wages, the value of

money, the standard of livelihood, or the scale of income, prevalent among those sections of the native community that enjoy the benefit of their labours.

9. In any present application of the principle it were needless to trouble ourselves over much in attempting to adjust our allowances to the supposed probabilities of what native Churches may *ultimately* be able to give. No action of ours can possibly determine what pastors shall have, when Churches become self-sustaining, and the population generally is elevated from its existing condition of intellectual, moral and physical degradation, through the combined influences of Christian education and material prosperity. The Churches will then do as they think proper; and they are, beyond all question, the best parties equitably to settle the whole question of suitable maintenance for all classes of labourers. What becomes us, is, to see to it, that by a rigid adherence to the principle so often alluded to, we do nothing, in our own peculiar transitional circumstances, that shall in any way prejudice, or in any way unnecessarily complicate that ultimate settlement.

10. Our grand endeavour should be, to impress on the minds of all candidates for office, in connection with the divine work of evangelization, the true scriptural idea of the high vocation after which they aspire—to require of every one, desirous of the work of the ministry, that he be “called of God,” and called to a work he is bound to fulfil, irrespective of the worldly view of sufficient or insufficient means of support;—in other words, that he must make the best of the means placed within his reach by a gracious providence, in order to discharge his primary and paramount duty as a servant of Christ, though these means be unequal in their amount, uncertain in their continuance, or far below the marketable value of those abilities he brings to bear on the service of his blessed Lord and Master. His real reward must be felt to be from God; his true and enduring recompense in the realization of the glorious promise, made to those who “turn many unto righteousness,” that they “shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.” In fact, what we want—what India wants—what the awful necessities of a lost and perishing world want—is, a race of spiritual, devoted, self-sacrificing men—men, who feel with the Apostle, “Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel”—“yea, necessity is laid upon me,” to preach to dying souls the words of eternal life. The question of the amount of salary will then sink, as it ought, into a very secondary consideration. To such men it will suffice, if they be able to obtain “daily bread.” If God in his providence, without any murmuring impatience or importunity on their part, give more, they will

only be the more grateful for that loving-kindness which enables them to discharge their great duty—their high vocation—under circumstances of greater comfort and ease.

11. The principle, therefore, on which Missionary Societies sustain their own missionaries, must be consistently carried through, and applied to all others who may temporarily be dependent on them, in whole or in part, for support. Were we to make the native Christian ministry a salaried profession, whose allowances are to be regulated by the standard of worldly offices, temptations would be presented to men of a hireling spirit—money might become an object to be desired—the position of the labourer might be misrepresented—the cause of the gospel might be thrown back through the prevalence of carnal-mindedness—and the greatest difficulties might be thrown in the way of the native Churches, whenever it shall please God to give them a self-reliant and independent position. Our duty, then, is not to fix on the *maximum* sum which may become the rule, when native Churches, having attained to the natural condition of self-support, shall adequately sustain their own catechists, preachers and pastors, according to their several ability; but only the *minimum* of a bare competency, during the temporary period of transition and dependence on foreign supplies. Even this minimum we ought not absolutely to guarantee beyond the passing month. Only in this way can the indolent and servile spirit of indefinite reliance on others be effectually broken, and all parties stimulated to exert every nerve and energy in the endeavour to enfranchise themselves in the inestimable privilege, of not only upholding the gospel within their own borders, but of contributing to extend it to “the regions beyond.” And only by some such manifestation of strenuous endeavour can the sympathies of Christian Churches in other lands be awakened and sustained, so as to furnish any thing like a moral assurance that they will not abruptly abandon their poorer brethren in India, while these are seen to be earnestly engaged in the onward, upward, and ennobling struggle after a full and honourable independence. Catechists and preachers who labour exclusively as evangelists among the heathen, it ought to be our endeavour wholly to maintain, under the limitations and conditions now indicated, so that they may be enabled to minister the word of life, “taking nothing of the Gentiles.” But in no case ought the ordained pastors of organized congregations to be wholly maintained by any foreign Church or Society. They ought to be dealt with,—and even that only for a time,—precisely in the same way as weak congregations at home or in the colonies have been dealt with. In other words, *partial*

aid may be extended to them for a season, by way of supplementing the free will offerings of the flocks, until, by growth in grace and accession of numbers, they become alike independent of foreign aid and foreign interference.

12. Bearing the above principles in view, the Conference suggest, that, in the existing circumstances of the great mass of the native population, the rates of salary, payable to catechists, preachers and native pastors, might be regulated somewhat according to the following scale:—

For catechists or preachers, who have been trained mainly or exclusively through the medium of the vernaculars, and whose sphere of labour is among the rural population;—to the unmarried, 8 Rs.; married, 12 to 16.

For catechists or preachers of the same class, residing in a chief city or town, and living after the simplest native fashion;—unmarried, 12: married, 16 to 20.

For country ordained pastors of superior vernacular training,—men of experience, character and worth, looked up to by the poor, not only as their counsellor but help, and carrying out the duties of hospitality;—unmarried 16: married, 20 to 25.

In a city like Calcutta, for ordained pastors of the same class;—unmarried, 20: married, 25 to 32.

For catechists or preachers, well educated in vernacular and English, and who have undergone a special theological training, which qualifies them for ministering to the educated classes;—unmarried, 25 to 32: married, 35 to 50.

The sums here proposed are meant to include house-rent and all other contingencies. And the Conference consider that a fair application of the principles, already laid down, to the existing circumstances of native life, will lead to some such scale as they have now presented. As a reward of labour, adequate to the toil and anxiety required, the salaries are confessedly low; but, viewed on Missionary principles, they believe they will be found sufficient to secure a comfortable support, and to leave the labourer's heart to devote all its powers to the glorious work of saving immortal souls.

Finally, it will be obvious that the practical conclusions, now suggested, proceed on the assumption, that it is the *general rule* with missions, not to *ordain* native catechists or preachers, *until there be organized congregations over which they may preside as pastors*. In such exceptional cases, as have already arisen, in connection with the Free Church or other missions;—cases of native brethren, who have gone through a complete course of training in European Literature and Science, as well as Christian Theology, through the medium of English; and who, in consequence, have been

advanced, after due examination, to the office of ordained evangelists, according to the ecclesiastical regime of their respective Churches;—the Conference are not yet prepared to suggest the results that ought to accrue from the practical application of the foregoing principles. For the present, such cases must be left to be dealt with exclusively by the several bodies, in connection with which they may have occurred; only, in so doing, the principles, now propounded, ought never to be lost sight of or forgotten; since, in the estimation of the Conference, these are the only ones that promise safety, peace, and spiritual prosperity.

Published by order of the Conference,
(Signed) D. EWART, *Secy.*

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